

IN THE CLAIMS:

Rewrite the pending claims as follows:

1-81. (Canceled)

82. (Currently Amended) A method for searching messages in a conversation-based message system, comprising:

at a client having one or more processors and memory storing programs executed by the one or more processors, responding to receipt of a query from a requestor, the query having one or more query terms, including:

transmitting the query over a network to a conversation management system;

receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier, and wherein each conversation comprises one or more messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet first predefined criteria and at least one conversation in the list of conversations comprises a plurality of messages; and

presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor, each conversation listed in the presented portion of the list being represented as a single item, the presented portion of the list including a plurality of items, each representing a distinct conversation, at least one of which comprises a plurality of messages, wherein each item representing a conversation having a plurality of messages has an associated icon indicating the number of electronic messages in the conversation.

83. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 82, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the presented portion of the list of conversations is generated so as to include a text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more query terms. ~~the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with second predefined criteria.~~

84. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 82, wherein ~~the second predefined criteria includes~~ the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with a date/time value of a most recently received message of ~~[[a]]~~ each respective conversation in the presented portion of the list.

85. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[84]] 82, wherein ~~the second predefined criteria includes~~ the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with, for each respective conversation in the presented portion of the list, a date/time value of a most recently received message ~~of a respective conversation that is~~ relevant to the search query.

86. (Currently Amended) A method for displaying messages, comprising:
at a server having one or more processors and memory storing programs executed by the one or more processors:

receiving a plurality of messages directed to a user, each message having a unique message identifier;

generating a plurality of conversations, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages; and

responding to a search request from a client associated with the user, the search request including one or more user-specified query terms, including:

selecting a list of conversations from the plurality of conversations in accordance with the search request, each conversation in the list including at least one electronic message that matches the search request, at least one conversation in the list comprising two or more electronic messages; and

transmitting over a network to the client for display the list of conversations in an order determined in accordance with first predefined criteria, each conversation in the list being represented as a single item in the list of conversations, at least one of the conversations in the list comprising two or more electronic messages, wherein each item representing a conversation having a plurality of messages has an associated icon indicating the number of electronic messages in the conversation.

87. (Previously presented) The method of claim 86, wherein the respective conversation identifier is distinct from a subject reference of the message.

88. (Previously presented) The method of claim 86, wherein the respective conversation identifier is based in part on information other than a subject reference of the message.

89. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 86, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the list is generated so as to include a text string having a

highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more user-specified query terms ~~each conversation comprises messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet second predefined criteria.~~

90. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[89]]~~ 86, wherein ~~the second predefined criteria include~~ at least one of the conversations comprises a plurality of electronic messages having a close temporal relationship with each other among the unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages.

91. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[89]]~~ 86, wherein ~~the common set of characteristics include~~ the two or more electronic messages in a conversation have substantially the same subject reference of the messages and at least one characteristic of the messages other than the subject reference.

92. (Previously presented) The method of claim 86, wherein the order is determined in accordance with a date/time of the most recent message in each conversation that is relevant to the query.

93. (Currently Amended) A server system for searching messages, comprising:
one or more processors;
memory coupled to the one or more processors, the memory storing programs for execution by the one or more processors, the programs including:
a receiving module for receiving a plurality of messages directed to a user, each message having a unique message identifier;
a conversation module for generating a plurality of conversations, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages;
a query response module for responding to a search request from a client associated with the user, the search request including one or more user-specified query terms, including:
instructions for selecting a list of conversations from the plurality of conversations in accordance with the search request, each conversation in the list including at least one electronic message that matches the search request, at least one conversation in the list comprising two or more electronic messages;

instructions for transmitting over a network, for display on the client, the list of conversations in an order determined in accordance with first predefined criteria, each conversation in the list being represented as a single item in the list of conversations, at least one of the conversations comprising two or more electronic messages, wherein each item representing a conversation having a plurality of messages has an associated icon indicating the number of electronic messages in the conversation.

94. (Previously presented) The server system of claim 93, wherein the respective conversation identifier is distinct from a subject reference of the message.

95. (Previously presented) The server system of claim 93, wherein the respective conversation identifier is based in part on information other than a subject reference of the message.

96. (Currently Amended) The server system of claim 93, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the list is generated so as to include a text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more user-specified query terms ~~each conversation comprises messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet second predefined criteria.~~

97. (Currently Amended) The server system of claim ~~[[96]]~~ 93, wherein ~~the common set of characteristics includes~~ at least one of the conversations comprises a plurality of electronic messages having a close temporal relationship with each other among the unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages.

98. (Currently Amended) The server system of claim ~~[[96]]~~ 93, wherein ~~the common set of characteristics includes~~ the two or more electronic messages in a conversation have substantially a same subject reference of the messages and at least one characteristic of the messages other than the subject reference.

99. (Previously presented) The server system of claim 93, wherein the conversations are prepared for presentation to the user in an order determined in accordance with a date/time of the most recent message in each conversation that is relevant to the query.

100. (Currently Amended) A system for searching messages in a conversation-based message system, comprising:

in a client:

one or more processors;

memory coupled to the one or more processors, the memory storing:

a search module for receiving a query from a requestor and transmitting the query over a network to a conversation management system, the query having one or more query terms;

a receiving module for receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier and at least one message relevant to the query, and wherein at least one conversation of the list of conversations comprises two or more messages of the plurality of messages; and

a presentation module for presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor, each conversation listed in the presented portion of the list being represented as a single item, the presented portion of the list including a plurality of items, each representing a distinct conversation, at least one of which comprises a plurality of messages, wherein each item representing a conversation having a plurality of messages has an associated icon indicating the number of electronic messages in the conversation.

101. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 100, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the presented portion of the list of conversations is generated so as to include a text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more query terms. ~~the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with predefined criteria.~~

102. (Currently Amended) A computer program product storing programs for execution by one or more processors of a server computer system, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a plurality of messages directed to a user, each message having a unique message identifier;

instructions for generating a plurality of conversations, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages; and

instructions for responding to a search request from a client associated with the user, the search request including one or more user-specified query terms, including:

instructions for selecting a list of conversations from the plurality of conversations in accordance with the search request, each conversation in the list including at least one electronic message that matches the search request, at least one conversation in the list comprising two or more electronic messages; and

instructions for transmitting over a network to the client for display the list of conversations in an order determined in accordance with first predefined criteria, each conversation in the list being represented as a single item in the list of conversations, at least one of the conversations comprising two or more electronic messages, wherein each item representing a conversation having a plurality of messages has an associated icon indicating the number of electronic messages in the conversation.

103. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 102, wherein the respective conversation identifier is different from a subject reference of the message.

104. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 102, wherein the respective conversation identifier is based in part on information other than a subject reference of the message.

105. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 102, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the list is generated so as to include a text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more user-specified query terms ~~each conversation comprises messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet second predefined criteria.~~

106. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim [[105]] 102, wherein ~~the common set of characteristics includes~~ at least one of the conversations comprises a plurality of electronic messages having a close temporal relationship with each other ~~among the unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages.~~

107. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim [[105]] 102, wherein ~~the common set of characteristics includes a~~ the two or more electronic messages in a conversation have substantially the same subject reference of the messages and at least one characteristic of the messages other than the subject reference.

108. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 102, wherein the instructions for preparing prepare the list of conversations for display in an order

determined in accordance with a date/time of the most recent message in each conversation that is relevant to the predefined query.

109. (Currently Amended) A computer program product storing programs for execution by one or more processors of a client computer system, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a query from a requestor, the query having one or more query terms, and responding to receipt of the ~~search request~~ query, including:

instructions for transmitting the query over a network from the client computer system to a conversation management system;

instructions for receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier and at least one electronic message relevant to the query, and wherein each conversation comprises one or more messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet first predefined criteria and at least one conversation of the generated list of conversations comprises two or more messages; and

instructions for presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor, each conversation listed in the presented portion of the list being represented as a single item, the presented portion of the list including a plurality of items, each representing a distinct conversation, at least one of which comprises a plurality of messages, wherein each item representing a conversation having a plurality of messages has an associated icon indicating the number of electronic messages in the conversation.

110. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 109, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the presented portion of the list of conversations is generated so as to include a text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more query terms. ~~the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with second predefined criteria.~~

111. (Currently Amended) A client system, comprising:

processor means; and

memory means coupled to the processor means;

the client system including:

means for responding to a query from a requestor, the query having one or more query terms, and responding to receipt of the search request, including

means for transmitting the query over a network to a conversation management system;

means for receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier and at least one message that matches the one or more query terms; wherein each conversation of comprises one or more messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet predefined criteria and at least one conversation of the received list of conversations comprises two or more messages; and

means for presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor, each conversation listed in the presented portion of the list being represented as a single item, the presented portion of the list including a plurality of items, each representing a distinct conversation, at least one of which comprises a plurality of messages, wherein each item representing a conversation having a plurality of messages has an associated icon indicating the number of electronic messages in the conversation.

112. (New) The method of claim 82, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the presented portion of the list includes a subject of the respective conversation and, in addition, a text string from the conversation, the text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more query terms.

113. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the list includes a subject of the respective conversation and, in addition, a text string from the conversation, the text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more user-specified query terms.

114. (New) The server system of claim 93, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the list includes a subject of the respective conversation and, in addition, a text string from the conversation, the text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more user-specified query terms.

115. (New) The system of claim 100, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the presented portion of the list includes a subject of the respective conversation and, in addition, a text string from the conversation, the text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more query terms.

116. (New) The computer program product of claim 102, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the list includes a subject of the respective conversation and, in addition, a text string from the conversation, the text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more user-specified query terms.

117. (New) The computer program product of claim 109, wherein the single item for a respective conversation in the presented portion of the list includes a subject of the respective conversation and, in addition, a text string from the conversation, the text string having a highlighted instance of at least one of the one or more query terms.